

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MARCH 17, 1880.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. HAMPTON, from the Committee on Military Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill S. 1490.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the letter of the Secretary of War, in answer to Senate resolution of March 4, 1878, communicating information concerning the data from which the positions of troops were added to the government maps of the battle of Gettysburg, accompanied by a report of the Chief of Engineers indorsing their valuable character, present fragile condition, and the importance of their preservation to history, also the resolution of the Society of the Army of the Potomac, reiterating their value, and the importance of their compilation, have examined these papers, and beg leave to report as follows:

The Chief of Engineers in his report states that "the data from which the positions of troops were placed upon the engineer map of the battle-field of Gettysburg, recently published, were collected by Mr. John B. Bachelder, and, as stated on the map, are from official reports, consultations on the field, private letters, and oral explanations of the officers of both armies.

"The data are not therefore in the possession of the War Department. The collection is of the most perishable nature, is possessed by no one else than Mr. Bachelder, and, unless compiled by him, will, at his death, be lost to history."

It appears that Mr. Bachelder, having the advantage of a military education, and love of history, went to the front early in 1862, more than a year before the battle of Gettysburg, to be in position to collect data when the most important battle of the war was fought. After working up the details of several engagements, he reached the battle-field of Gettysburg before the dead were buried, remaining for eighty-four days, making plans of the field, visiting the wounded in hospital, and by permission taking the convalescent officers over the field, by whom their positions and movements were pointed out and established. During this period books full of notes from these actors were secured within a few weeks of the battle. With this information and sketches thus secured, he visited the Army of the Potomac, spending the winter of 1863-64 in consultations with the officers of every regiment and battery, whose conversations and explanations were carefully noted and preserved. At the close of the war Mr. Bachelder issued an invitation to the many officers whose acquaintance he had made to visit Gettysburg with him for historical purposes, which was accepted by over one thousand; forty-nine of them generals commanding. From the acquaintance thus

secured has resulted, during the past sixteen years, a most valuable correspondence regarding the battle of Gettysburg.

The Secretary of War, having ordered the preparation of maps of the battle of Gettysburg, and secured the most careful surveys for that purpose, found that the official reports of the battle were so incomplete and conflicting that the positions of troops could not be located from them; whereupon, on the following recommendation of the Chief of Engineers, Mr. Bachelder was employed to do the work:

Mr. Bachelder, as you are probably aware, is preparing a history of the battle of Gettysburg. The information he has collected concerning that battle is extraordinary in amount and correctness. So far as I am able to judge, there is no battle of any war respecting which so many truthful accounts, so many exact details, have been collected and compared with each other, from every source, from the private to the generals commanding the armies. * * I have been acquainted with the thoroughness of Mr. Bachelder's researches since the winter of 1863-64, when he visited every part of the Army of the Potomac. I have since gone over the battle-field with him, and had many interviews with him concerning it.

Mr. Bachelder was engaged by the War Department to do the work, and after years of patient examination of the mass of material thus collected, the maps were completed, representing six phases of the battle; and were approved by the Secretary of War.

Immediately upon their distribution letters were received from all sections of the country by the Chief of Engineers (several of which have been transmitted by the Secretary of War) urging the importance of compiling in text form the knowledge which the maps embody. General Hancock writes:

Is it not wise to seize the occasion to have such details published while it can yet be done?

General Longstreet says:

I beg leave to suggest the importance of a thorough narrative of events connected with the battle, as well as a detailed analysis of the tactical moves upon the field.

General Warren says:

Unless this is compiled and arranged by Mr. Bachelder, it will be lost to history.

General Fitzhugh Lee says:

I know I express the sentiment of those on my side in the operations referred to when I say that we hope every facility will be given Mr. Bachelder to prosecute his purpose of compiling them.

General Hunt says:

Much of the information, collected and noted under unfavorable circumstances, would be undecipherable and unintelligible for others, and under no circumstances could another make as good use of the material as the man who collected it.

Many other letters of like character, together with nineteen memorials to Congress, presented from the several States, asking that this be done, of which the following are specimens:

One from ex-officers of the Army of the Potomac, indorsing the value of the material and asking that it be preserved, &c., signed by Generals Hancock, Wright, Slocum, Gibbon, Warren, Webb, Graham, Owen, Cross, Shaler, Barnum, Ward, McMahon, Sargeant, Cogswell, Underwood, Robinson, Neill, Torbert, Carr, Carroll, Wells, Stannard, Tilton, Coxe, McCandless, Selfridge, Brigham, Carman, and many others, with a long list of subordinate officers. And another received from late officers of the Army of Northern Virginia, asking "that the Secretary of War have the data compiled and published in text form," &c., signed by Generals Kemper, Fitzhugh Lee, Maury, Taliaferro, W. H. F. Lee, Echols, Lane, Walker, Bradley T. Johnson, Anderson, Hunton, Payne,

Terry, McComb, Allen, Alexander, Holtzelaw, Fry, and many other officers of all ranks.

There are also over one hundred and fifty letters from military men, college professors, directors of historical societies, public libraries, and other literary institutions, urging the importance to the history of the country that the maps be accompanied by a text description, and the knowledge which they embody be placed within reach of the public.

Your committee have also examined a series of diagrams representing the battle from its commencement, prepared by Mr. Bachelder, indicating the changing positions of regiments and batteries by dotted lines and arrows, the whole forming a most comprehensive representation; alluding to which the Chief of Engineers says in his report:

Most of the commands made frequent changes and took up different positions that do not appear on the (engineer) maps but which could be represented on diagrams by Mr. Bachelder from data in his possession, which would complete the illustration of the text. He could prepare the tactical moves at Gettysburg in more detail probably than has heretofore been done for any battle.

The Secretary of War, in his letter accompanying these papers, says:

The views of the Chief of Engineers are concurred in, and it is recommended that Congress provide in some adequate manner for the publication of the data in question.

Your committee therefore, believing that this material is too valuable in the military history of the country to be lost, report the accompanying bill and recommend its passage.

